

Media Release

Christchurch convention centre process underway

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Work on Christchurch's new Convention Centre Precinct is underway, with the Christchurch Central Development Unit (CCDU) and Christchurch City Council now calling for expressions of interest (EOI) from groups wishing to participate in the project.

Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee says the EOI process will enable the private sector to put forward initial proposals for the convention centre, its car parking area, connected retail and commercial operations, and a five star hotel.

Submitted EOIs will need to outline proposed design, build, finance, maintenance and operation of the Convention Centre Precinct in a plan that would see the facilities open for business by March 2017.

"We've opened up a blank canvas for a single company or consortiums to let us know how they might deliver all of the required components, or some elements that play to their particular strengths," Mr Brownlee says.

The precinct's development will be led jointly by the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) and the Christchurch City Council, working closely with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and Ngāi Tahu.

To complement other facilities across New Zealand the convention centre must be able to run three concurrent events and be able to comfortably host 2000 delegates. The Convention Centre Precinct will be connected to Cathedral Square, Victoria Square, and the Avon River Precinct so it will need to be built with those links in mind.

"This precinct needs to be the connecting element to the various parts of the CBD, and ensure its visitors can easily utilise and appreciate Christchurch's other important assets. And in keeping with the exciting new city we are creating around it, it needs to be an iconic facility that makes an impressive aesthetic statement."

Mr Brownlee says the Convention Centre Precinct is a priority Anchor Project for Christchurch and will act as a catalyst to reinvigorate the city centre, as well as boost the wider Canterbury economy.

"With work underway on this precinct, other businesses will be keen to cement their own position in the central city.

"The convention centre will need to be supported by other hotels, eateries and shops, so this step will trigger progress for other businesses too."

The EOI documentation can be downloaded from the Government Electronic Tendering Service website www.gets.govt.nz, and prospective providers have until 9 November to submit their proposals.

Selected respondents may be invited to discuss their concepts further, and all respondents will be advised of the outcome of the process in February next year.